

**OPTIMISTIC LIFE REFLECTED IN PAUL KALANITHI'S
WHEN BREATH BECOMES AIR (2016) BY USING
EXISTENTIALIST PERSPECTIVE**



**Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Getting Bachelor
Degree of Education in English Department**

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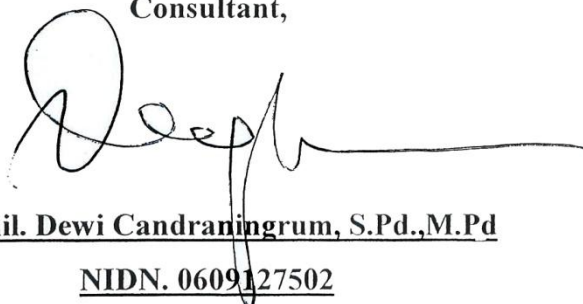
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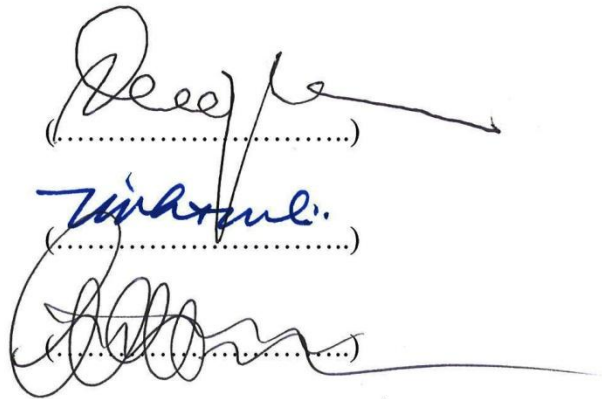
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Here with, I testify that in this publication article, there is no plagiarism of the previous literary work, which has been raised to obtain bachelor degree in any university, nor there are opinions or master pieces which have been written or published by others except those in which the writing are referred in this paper and mentioned in the literary review and bibliography.

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OPTIMISTIC LIFE REFLECTED IN PAUL KALANITHI'S WHEN BREATH BECOMES (2016) BY USING EXISTENTIALIST PERSPECTIVE

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan bagaimana sifat hidup optimis seorang dokter ahli saraf yang didiagnosa kanker paru-paru stadium 4 digambarkan di dalam novel *When Breath Becomes Air* (2016) karya Paul Kalanithi sendiri menggunakan eksistensialis perspektif. Novel *When Breath Becomes Air* (2016) dianalisis mengacu pada 3 poin. Pertama adalah analisis bagaimana gambaran sifat hidup optimis digambarkan di dalam novel menggunakan eksistensialis perspektif, kedua adalah analisis jenis – jenis sifat hidup optimis yang digambarkan di dalam novel, dan yang ketiga adalah analisis apa saja yang mempengaruhi penulis mengangkat sifat hidup optimis sebagai topik utama di dalam novel. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif. Penelitian ini menggunakan dua sumber data, yang pertama adalah novel *When Breath Becomes Air* (2016) karya Paul Kalanithi sebagai sumber utama. Sumber data kedua adalah pencarian dari buku, jurnal, dan sumber yang berhubungan dengan penelitian. Dua sumber tersebut diperoleh melalui toko buku dan internet yang kemudian dianalisa menggunakan analisa deskriptif. Berdasarkan penelitian tersebut, peneliti menyimpulkan beberapa kesimpulan. Pertama, berdasarkan teori eksistensialis sifat hidup optimis digambarkan di dalam novel *When Breath Becomes Air* (2016). Kedua, ada beberapa jenis sifat optimis yang digambarkan di dalam novel. Ketiga, ada beberapa latar belakang penulis yang mempengaruhinya mengangkat sifat optimis sebagai topik utama novel *When Breath Becomes Air* (2016).

Kata Kunci : Optimis, Eksistensialis perspektif, *When Breath Becomes Air*

Abstract

This study aims to explain how optimistic life reflected in the novel *When Breath Becomes Air* (2016) by Paul Kalanithi using an existentialist perspective. The novel *When Breath Becomes Air* (2016) is analyzed in three aspects. First is based on how optimistic life reflected in the novel by using an existentialist perspective, second is based on kinds of optimistic life which are reflected in the novel, third is based on the reasons why the author raised optimistic life as the main topic in the novel. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach. This study uses two sources of data, the first is the novel *When Breath Becomes Air* (2016) by Paul Kalanithi as the main source. The second source of data is searching from books, journals, and sources related to the analysis. The two types of sources are obtained through the book store and the internet then analyzed using descriptive analysis. Based on these studies, the researcher draws some conclusions. The first is based on existentialism theory optimistic life is depicted in the novel. The second is there are some kinds of optimism that are depicted in the novel. The third is there is some background of effect the author raised optimistic life as the main topic in the novel *When Breath Becomes Air* (2016).

Keywords: Optimistic, Existentialist perspective, *When Breath Becomes Air*

1. INTRODUCTION

Optimistic life is a life that is disposed to think positively or take a positive view of something and expect the most positive outcome. Some optimistic feelings may be influenced by their life goals. By having the objective of life, someone will try to strive for fulfilling their needs and getting optimism to reach it. Optimistic feeling also encourages them to be more active to achieve the perfect life or life which they want to. Because of this condition, they try to leave their weakness or their inferior thinking to get the life that they want to. Optimism is all about "can-do" beliefs, positive view, expectations, choices, and strategies, also about knowing someone can be effective on their behalf. The optimism learns all they can from the adversity and then propels themselves forward their goals and vision. The optimists take credit for the things which they have accomplished, savor the victories, and use them as fuel for the on-going journey of dreams and discovery.

Paul Kalanithi as the author of the novel wants to motivate the readers through "*When Breath Becomes Air*" novel. The readers have to be optimistic about living life. In this world, everyone has different conditions in living their lives. Some people get their nice, prosperous, happy, and wealthy life. On the other hand, there are several who live in misery and illness. Optimistic people always live happily without any complaints. Although they have been given many obstacles or problems in life, they still keep their smiles and strive for a better life. On the other side, several people who are only given a few problems and sadness are pessimistic in living their lives. They will complain about their life problems and give up easily. Paul Kalanithi has gone through with illness problem, but he keeps optimistic. He had cancer that attacks his lungs, backbone, and his liver. He was inspired to start writing to make other people believe through life optimistically.

There two reasons why the researcher is interested to analyze this novel. Firstly, the topic of the novel is interesting. This novel is an autobiography that means it is a true story about Paul Kalanithi's life, how he faces his cancer. Ironically he got cancer when he was at the top of his career when the diagnosis turned his life upside down into what could be considered ironic; one day he was a doctor, the next a terminally ill patient. Kalanithi's cancer was the only answer to

his question, "What makes a life worth living?". The second, this study can be beneficial for the student with the good moral values contained in this research that optimism is needed for achieving the perfect life which they want to. Paul Kalanithi strives to live, although he got cancer. He had to live and struggle to live with his sickness. However, he looked optimistic and enjoyed his life.

The researcher decides to use the existentialism analysis to analyze this novel because the approach is suitable for the topic which will be discussed. The novel shows the optimistic life of the main characters in the novel, Paul Kalanithi. For those reasons, the researcher conducted this research entitled **Optimistic Life Reflected In Paul Kalanithi *When Breath Becomes Air* (2016): An Existentialist Perspective.**

2. METHOD

In analyzing the research, the researcher uses a descriptive qualitative approach. A descriptive qualitative approach is research that obtained the data through the library and the internet then analyzed using descriptive analysis (study.com). Firstly, the researcher reads the whole novel *When Breath Becomes Air* (2016) then take some notes related to the issue. The second, the researcher is browsing the internet to get several information and articles related to the object of the study then identifying the problem and finding the data. The third, the researcher analyses the data using the existentialist approach.

3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Paul Kalanithi's optimistic life when he facing the on of the road of his life to make choice what will he do before he dies. His optimism to stay positive in every event in his life. There are some findings on how optimistic life depicted in the novel. Those are :

3.1 Freedom

Freedom is the power or right to act. De Beauvoir effectively changes the existential focus from a concern with one's freedom into a concern that necessarily incorporates the freedom of others. Freedom becomes both the defining characteristic of human existence and also its ethical ideal. It is also asserted by

Yunus (2011) that freedom was "is the essence of human beings, usually, humans are always free to create him-self. Humans are free to organize, select and can give meaning to reality".

Everyone has the freedom to do or to be whatever they want to be, and also the main character in the novel named Paul Kalanithi, he has the freedom to live what he wants event he diagnosed with lung cancer stage IV. He still working, studying, and writing and importantly he doesn't give up to live freely as he wants.

3.2 Choice

The choice is the decision that we have to take decide something. Choice can be true or wrong. The option to choose is something that we no longer just value but now *expect*. It means that to make choices we have to be in a clear mind. According to Sarte (1984) " ... and it is this choice that controls the way that we interpret the objects that we deal with in everyday life.

A choice that has been selected by Paul Kalanithi is he chooses to have a child even he knows he had cancer and he knows he can stand by his child for a long time. But he still chooses to have a child because he has freedom of choice and he always looks at everything positively.

3.3 Responsibilities

Responsibilities are such an awareness to do something that attached to one's self. Responsibilities are related to and the implication of a duty. When we are given the freedom to choose something or make a choice then we have to be responsible. "De Beauvoir's point is that the individual must accept the responsibility that begins with the other's need" (O'flynn, 2009).

By reading the whole story of the novel the researcher knows that Paul Kalanithi was very responsible for what has become her decision. He believes that he will find and get through to solve the problem well. When he decides to have a child he forgetting about his illness and enjoy every time, every day and every moment with his child and give much love as much as he can before he stops at the end of the road.

The researcher can find a correlation between the perspective, the theory of optimism, and the reason why Optimistic Life specifically addressed by the

author. Paul Kalanithi as the author of the novel was a doctor and neurosurgeon who had ironically events in his life. He graduated with a Bachelor of arts and a Master of Art in English Literature and a Bachelor of Science in Human Biology at Stanford University. He graduated with a Master of Arts in the History and Philosophy of science and medicine in the University of Cambridge at Darwin college, Kalanithi then attended the Yale School of Medicine where he graduated in 2007 and winning the Dr. Louis H. Nahum Prize for his research on Tourette's syndrome. After graduating from medical school Kalanithi returned to Stanford to complete his residency training in neurosurgery and postdoctoral fellowship in neuroscience at Stanford University School of Medicine.

The reason Paul Kalanithi has made this novel is to share his story in his pastime life, when he at the peak of his career but suddenly he forced to see the end of the road of his journey, he wrote this novel to tell us we should face everything in positive way even death is close to us, this is the first novel that he published, and the first memoir that he published, in hope that this novel can make every people who read this novel can live happily after read his novel and can face every problem in their life.

The researcher chooses the topic as the Optimistic Life in this novel in showing how we facing our problem. Kalanithi's optimism in facing his problem is depicted clearly in the novel. Related to the issue which is raised by the researcher there some kind of optimistic life related to the novel, philosophical optimism, dispositional optimism, and explanatory style.

Optimistic life depicted in the novel by using an existentialist perspective. According to Beauvoir, "a woman must break the bonds of her patriarchal society and define herself if she wishes to become a significant human being in her own right and defy male classification as the other." (Bressler). Her willingness to solve the case can be depicted through this perspective. There are three concepts of existentialist perspective according to Beauvoir which is reflected in the novel, there are freedom, choice, and responsibility. The three concepts are depicted clearly in the novel. It is seen through all the attitude of the main character in the novel.

4. CONCLUSION

Optimistic life is a life that is disposed to think positively or take a positive view of something and expect the most positive outcome. Some optimistic feelings may be influenced by their life goals. By having the objective of life, someone will try to strive for fulfilling their needs and getting optimism to reach it. Optimistic feeling also encourages them to be more active to achieve the perfect life or life which they want to. Because of this condition, they try to leave their weakness or their inferior thinking to get the life that they want to. Optimism is all about "can-do" beliefs, positive view, expectations, choices, and strategies, also about knowing someone can be effective on their behalf. The optimism learns all they can from the adversity and then propels themselves forward their goals and vision. The optimists take credit for the things which they have accomplished, savor the victories, and use them as fuel for the on-going journey of dreams and discovery.

An optimistic life is depicted clearly in the novel. Some acts are done by the main character in the novel. Paul Kalanithi is the main character in the novel also the author. How optimistic life reflected in the novel starts when Paul Kalanithi facing every problem, every event in his life in a positive way. Until he faces his death and decided for his freedom, for what he wants, for everything that makes everything optimistically.

When Breath Becomes Air was in influence in many life. The book made you think about whom the reader can and can not agree, and also showed some point of view to face problems positively. The topics in the novel are about the author last time before he dies because of lung cancer stage IV. The message that the novel wants to convey to the readers is that the readers who are can be everyone especially they who had depression or pessimism way in look every event in their life, they should not live in negative or pessimist again but always feeling grateful for every moment in their life.

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